



# VILLAGE WATCH



Newsletter of South Anston Village Neighbourhood Watch  
in conjunction with South Yorkshire Police  
Edition 247 – February 2017

## **FAKE CHARITY DONATIONS ON SOCIAL MEDIA**

- The National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB) has identified an emerging fraud where social media platforms are being used to attract members of the public to donate money to animal welfare charities overseas that do not exist. Criminal groups based in Spain or Cyprus target donors from the UK.
- Sometimes an article or post on social media may indicate the payments are for charitable organisation or a “worthy cause”. Sadly not in all instances are these genuine, and if any doubt please make some checks.
- Genuine charities are registered with the Charity Commission ([www.gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission)) and print their registration details on all documentation, collection bags, envelopes, electronic communications etc. Check these details exist and also contact the Charity Commission to confirm they are authentic.
- If the collection is for a charity you know is genuine, check the collection is authorised by asking the charity directly, using contact details from the phone book or a website that you know is genuine.
- Scams, especially from abroad, often contain poor grammar and spelling.
- Send your donation to the charity directly. This may mean going to a little more trouble, but at least you can be sure your donation will get to where it's intended.

## **FAKE AMAZON E-MAILS**

- Convincing looking e-mails are being sent out claiming to be from Amazon. Typically the scam e-mail (from “[service@amazon.co.uk](mailto:service@amazon.co.uk)”) will claim the recipient has placed an order online for an expensive item such as electrical goods, watch, jewellery, camera, phone, and includes a convincing looking order form. The e-mail cleverly states that if the recipient hasn't authorised the transaction they can click on a link to the help centre to receive a full refund.
- The link leads to an authentic-looking website, which asks victims to confirm their name, address, and bank card information. One victim reported entering his Nationwide banking details and later found out £750 had been stolen from his account. Amazon says that suspicious e-mails will often contain:
  - Links to websites that look like Amazon.co.uk, but aren't Amazon.co.uk.
  - Attachments or prompts to install software on your computer.
  - Spelling and grammatical errors.
  - Forged (or spoofed) e-mail addresses to make it look like the e-mail is coming from Amazon.co.uk.
  - In addition Amazon will never ask for personal information to be supplied by e-mail.

## **HMRC AND APPLE ITUNES GIFT CARD FRAUD**

- Voicemail, a spoofed telephone number, and e-mails are being sent to potential victims saying that they owe HMRC unpaid taxes. They are told that there is a case being built against them for an outstanding debt, or there is a warrant out for their arrest, unless they make a payment via iTunes Vouchers. The scammers don't need the physical card to redeem the value and instead get victims to read out the serial code on the back over the phone to them.

## SMART METERS – UPDATE

- A year ago Village Watch featured smart meters - the new gas and electricity meters that can automatically send daily meter readings to your supplier.
- **How much do they cost?:** You won't have to pay upfront for a smart meter – they will be paid for by increases to everyone's energy bills. A smart meter won't automatically save you money - you'll have to do something to reduce your energy usage. An 'in-home' display keeps track of how much energy you're using and it may help to reduce it – but you may have to ask for one. Original estimated savings for each home were £26 per year, but that has now been reduced to £11. Is it worth it?
- **How to get a smart meter:** Your supplier should contact you to tell you when you can get one, or you can contact them and ask. Smart meters can't be installed in some premises because of insufficient space or signalling difficulties.
- **Security & privacy:** Who sees your consumption data and what can they do with it? Your supplier might want to collect more detailed information than daily meter readings. They must get your permission to do this, and they must ask for your consent to share your data with other organisations or use it for sales and marketing. Do you trust them to keep your data safe? Do you feel comfortable knowing that some people in an organisation can have a good idea of whether your property is occupied, particularly if you are away? If you're worried about sending daily readings to your supplier, you can choose to send one reading a month (this is the minimum your supplier will need to be able to bill you).
- **Refusing a smart meter:** You don't have to accept a smart meter. If your supplier tells you that you must have one, contact the Citizens Advice consumer helpline – see **CONTACTS** below. If you refuse one, you may not be eligible for all your energy supplier's tariffs. Some tariffs might only be available to customers with smart meters. One option is to have a smart meter installed but ask for its 'smart' functionality to be switched off - this means it works in the same way as your current meter, and won't send any information to your supplier. You can have the functionality turned back on later. Or choose to send one reading a month as above.
- **Switching supplier:** If you have a smart meter, you'll still be able to switch energy supplier. However, this has proved troublesome in some cases. Check with the new supplier before you switch. If you're told by a supplier that you can't switch because you have a smart meter, contact the Citizens Advice consumer helpline.

## WHAT'S HOT?

- **STOPPING FRAUD:** Whether it's a phone call, text or e-mail, if it makes you feel flustered or rushed – STOP and ask why is somebody trying to get you act this instant?
  - Don't assume an e-mail, text or phone call is authentic even if it seems convincing
  - Never disclose security details, such as your PIN or full banking password
  - Don't be rushed – a genuine organisation won't mind waiting
  - Listen to your instincts – you know if something doesn't feel right
  - Stay in control – don't panic and make a decision you'll regret
  - Is there someone else you can discuss it with before doing anything?

## CONTACTS

- **SY Police:** for non-emergency calls, to report a crime, or give information: 101 or from the main SYP web page ([www.southyorks.police.uk](http://www.southyorks.police.uk)) in the **Contact Us** tab under **Report a crime**.
- **Crimestoppers:** To give information about crime (you don't have to give your name): 0800 555 111. Open Monday-Friday 08:00-22:00; Saturday and Sunday 10:00-16:00
- **Citizens Advice consumer helpline:** 03454 04 05 06 <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk>
- Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm
- **South Anston Village Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator:** Bryan Saunby: 01909 565194
- **Rother Valley South Area Assembly Meetings 2017:**
- Monday 13th February, 2pm at Woodsetts Village Hall

## CRIMES REPORTED IN DECEMBER IN SOUTH ANSTON

Crime on or near	Crime Category	Crime on or near	Crime Category

## CRIMES REPORTED IN DECEMBER IN NORTH ANSTON

[illegible]